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ABSTRACT

A study examined 90 newspaper reports from the local and provincial press in Great Britain which covered the relaunch of Mencap, the largest national charity for people with learning disabilities. Mencap has adopted a new corporate style, a new logo, and a new "positive" image to reflect changing attitudes about disabilities. Using for analysis the criteria defined within the organization's press releases, the study focused on two key issues: (1) how closely the press reported Mencap's changing imagery and demonstrated an awareness of the underlying objectives; and (2) how the press included additional aspects of portraying representations of "learning disability." Findings suggest that, although the relaunch was generally reported favorably, there is a basic dilemma in reporting on disability. This includes the need for charities to convey key issues with clarity to journalists and advertisers so that mixed messages are not conveyed, and the challenge that arises in addressing the complex and diffuse nature of "learning disability." For example, the media do not see disabled people as a minority group with a political identity and, therefore, the disability community is not considered newsworthy. One recommendation is to get more accurate stories printed, and that special educators should develop strong relationships with newspaper reporters and editors. (Contains 9 tables; 34 references; a list of newspaper sources; the press releases; and details of the relaunch, with photos of "real" people with disabilities, and the old and new logos.) (NKA)

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HOW THE LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL PRESS IN BRITAIN REPORTED THE RELAUNCH OF MENCAP:

changing images of learning disabilities.

A paper presented to the
Group on the Status of Persons with Disabilities of the
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ABSTRACT

HOW THE LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL PRESS IN BRITAIN REPORTED THE RELAUNCH OF MENCAP: changing images of learning disabilities.

In this paper we examine newspaper reports from the local and provincial press in Britain, which covered the relaunch of the largest national charity for people with learning disabilities, Mencap. We analyse these examples, using the criteria defined within the press releases. In our analysis, we focus upon two key isses. The first is to evaluate how closely the press reported this changing imagery and demonstrated an awareness of the underlying objectives. The second is to explore the way in which they included additional aspects of portraying representations of "learning disability". We conclude the paper with a brief discussion about the dilemma which advertising disability creates. This includes the need for charities to convey key issues with clarity to journalists and advertisers. The challenge arises in addressing the complex and diffuse nature of "learning disability".

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INTRODUCTION

Mencap was founded in 1946 as "The National Association for the Parents of Backward Children" and was essentially an organisation which provided support for the parents of children with "mental handicaps". The term "Mentally Handicapped" was formally adopted in 1955 and eventually became The Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults, Mencap. (Durham, 1992) Mencap is now the largest organisation in the UK for parents, families and people with learning disabilities. Its management structure is divided into three sections, 500 plus Local Societies, 7 Mencap Divisions which link the local and National Centre and the National Centre. These are staffed by a mixture of paid professionals and unpaid voluntary members. Mencap provides a range of key services such as an employment opportunities project, a network of houses in the community and 700 "Gateway" leisure clubs for people with learning disabilities. (Heddell,1993).

The relaunch of Mencap on the 26th October was designed to give every part of the organisation the opportunity to redefine the image and to plan and move forward into the 21st century. (mencapnews November 1992). The new image reflects the changing attitudes towards learning disabilities which is demonstrated in the change of logos.

> In the early days, striking drawings of pathetic children helped to draw public attention to the plight of backward children" and the drawing of "Little Stephen", was used by Mencap until 1992.
> (mencapreview 1993 p 11.)

Mencap are aware of the need to be positive and the new logo

which has been developed includes "positive pictures of real people, engaged in common everyday activities." (mencapreview 1993 p11.) These images were chosen to reflect and capture the spirit epresented by Mencap, that of "joy, success and independence".

In addition Mencap have adopted a, "new corporate style and some clear statements of intent in the new Mencap manifestos" were developed (mencapnews Nov. 1992 p 1.). The marketing and Appeals Director, Steve Billington, in speaking about the objectives of the new Mencap " announced to the world that MENCAP is a campaigning force (mencapnews Dec 1992. p 1.) Full details of the campaign are attached.

In this paper we will examine and analyse the relaunch as reported within the British local and provincial newspapers. An analysis of this type provides the opportunity to explore the potential for confusion and mixed messages and illustrates the conflict between advertising images and disability politics.

Information was given to the press by Mencap in the form of press releases (attached) and we were interested to see how closely these were followed.

In general the material which looks at press coverage of disability issues tends to include some discussion about the power of the press to inform and influence public perception. Mankiewicz (1978) and Yoshida et al (1990) consider that newspapers "are a powerful medium for developing public opinion about issues" (p 418) and McLoughlin and Trammell, (1979) and (shearer, 1984) found that the press shaped public perception,

attitudes and ideas towards disabled people. Louis Harris (1991) found that the media "have the potential to significantly influence people's perceptions of individuals with disabilities" (p 179). Chris Davies (1991) believes that newspapers have considerable power as opinion informers and that newspaper journalism is the section of the media which most readily reinforces our disabling society. There is no clear consensus of opinion emerging from the literature. This view is supported by Colin Barnes (1992) who acknowledges that,

> "whilst there is some dispute about the level of influence the mass media has on our perceptions of the world there are few who believe that it does not have any.
> (p 11.)

Biklen (1987) in his examination of media power makes an important point. Although the media may not be as powerful as some would think in influencing the shape of the public agenda and may not easily be able to make a prejudiced person unprejudiced, it may be influential in continuing certain some prejudicial practices, articulating them instead in other terms, as professional or social policy debates. (p 81)

Smith and Jordan (1991) say that newspapers, "whatever their effect", have an important role to play in promoting images of disability,

> ....as TV coverage of disability issues is often confined to "minority" programming, the papers are a particularly important arena in which images of disability are portrayed.
> (p 9.)

65% of the UK. population read a daily newspaper and 72% a Sunday newspaper. (Peak, 1993). It is difficult to assess how many people read the regional, and local weeklies which the sample

included as many of the newspapers are free sheets distributed locally. Accurate circulation figures are unavailable but our sample represents a large number of potential readers.

The academic studies referred to in this paper are concerned with National newspapers. There are no academic studies which examine disability issues in local or provincial newspapers. If we are to gain a deeper understanding of changing attitudes towards learning disability, it seems to us that we need to analyse coverage in the provincial and local newspapers. In Britain as in America, local and provincial papers tend to have the following characteristics: an emphasis on local dignitaries, civic pride and, above all, conservatism with a small "c". We feel, therefore, that in exploring this rarely examined aspect of press coverage we can evaluate the extent to which political awareness is increasing among the silent majority. As we will demonstrate in our findings, it is not surprising that local and provincial papers tend to resort to those comforting stereotypes which suit their readership.

PRESS COVERAGE OF DISABILITY ISSUES.

In one of the first studies of media portrayals of disability, Biklen and Bogdana (197?) identified 10 commonly recurring stereotypes, and in 1987 they examined the coverage of two major medically orientated stories, that of baby Jane Doe and Elizabeth Bouvia. This they found to be condescending and paternalistic (Clogston, 1993) and concentrated on their respective right to live or die and whose right it is to make those decisions. Most of the early studies found that coverage in newspapers was

predominantly traditional. For example, Yoshida, (1990) found that interest in special education stories was high though the type of story was traditionally that of "budget, expenditures, taxes, housing or normalisation and treatment in institutions." (p 418.)

The recent focus on disability rights issues in the U.K. and in the US has produced changes in emphasis and an increase in the amount of coverage of disability issues in the mass media (Barnes, 1992, Cumberbach, el al 199. Clogston,J.1993). Paul Longmore (1985 and 1987 cited by Gazsi 1992 p 178), Professor of History at Stanford University, confirms that the changes which are occurring in the media's portrayals in the US are due to advocacy groups working with the media in an advisory role and a more vociferous disability rights movement which is creating a greater awareness of the disability community. Clogston (1992 and 1993) reported a trend towards more progressive story topics (those "which focus more on how society deals with a population which includes those with various disabilities" , p 4) in The New York Times, Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times between 1976 and 1991. Oliver (1990) found that there had been some attempt by the mass media to break down some of the dominant cultural images through the use of specialist television programmes, drama and documentaries. Haller (1992) cited in Clogston (1993) found that coverage of deaf issues was less stereotypical in The New York Times from 1988.

Smith and Jordan (1991) found that British National newspapers focused on a limited number of issues. Three subjects dominated the press coverage, Health, Fundraising/charity issues and

personal/individual interest stories and the

> so called medical "problems" of disabled people completely overshadow the political/social issues that relate to disability.
> (Smith and Jordan p 22.)

METHODOLOGY.

Mencap made available their collection of local and provincial press reports concerned with the relaunch. In total 90 reports written between 22nd November and 3rd December were analyzed using the following categories: terminology used; mention of race, ethnicity, age, different disabilities; rights; descriptions of the details of the campaign; descriptions of patronage, eg mention of prestigious people, The Queen, The Queen Mother, Lord Rix (National Chair of Mencap and a well known actor), Members of Parliament, local councillors and local mencap officials; mention of the replacement of "Little Stephen"; details of mencap's new image; details of mencap's new objectives; details of the Mencap Media Award.

These categories summarise the information in the three press releases. In addition we looked for,

mention of special services, fundraising, the call for volunteers.

uses made of photographs,

use of positive and negative terminology in headlines.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT.

LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY.

The reports were examined for their use of language and the

results are summarised below. The number of times each word or phrase was used was counted.

USE OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS.

MENTAL HANDICAP	MENTAL DISABILITY	LEARNING DIFFICULTY	LEARNING DISABILITY
142	8	46	93
DOWNS/OTHER NAMED DISABILITIES	**HANDICAPPED**	**OTHERS**	**A MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY**
8	14	15	4

"Mental handicap" was used 142 times in 75 reports. However, in many reports it was common practice to link people with learning disabilities/mental handicap, the phrase used in the press releases."Learning disabilities" the preferred terminology by People First and the National Mencap organisation was used 93 times in 57 reports. "Learning difficulties" the phrase which National Mencap and People First are trying to replace, was used 46 times in 36 articles. Handicap has almost disappeared and appeared only 14 times in 12 reports.

REPORTED DETAILS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

The reports were examined to see if they contained reference to ethnicity or race, different ages, or a range of disabilities. The five images Mencap have created are photographs of people with a learning disability of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and levels of disability and reflect Mencap's new future objectives. (Press Releases 7th October and 7th September 1992).

ETHNICITY/RACE	DIFFERENT AGES	DIFFERENT DISABILITIES
34	32	3

Some of the reports mention all or some of the above. In 23 additional reports there was no specific reference to age per se but through the reporting two messages concerned with age emerged. These were that Mencap is not an organisation concerned only with children and that the "Mencap" of the future will more obviously help and support people with learning disabilities from all age groups.

Next the reports were examined for any mention and details of, the following points,

the number of new images; the phrase " a new image" with no details; the word, manifesto; details of the manifestos; reference to the images/photographs being of "real people", and reference to the images/photographs being of people with learning disabilities/mental handicaps/difficulties.

PHOTO-GRAPHS NUMBER	NEW LOGO	MANI-FESTO	MANI-FESTO DETAILS	REAL LIFE	PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
58	19	20	5	30	15

Some reports mentioned only one point whilst others made reference to more. Seven reports contained no details of the campaign but instead were concerned with local Mencap human interest stories. For example, the local MP becoming the branch president (Somerset Standard); a photograph of officials and professionals at a mencap conference (Ballymena Observer), and a letter of thanks for money raised at a local re-launch (Brackley and Towcester Advertiser). Three reported the new image

without any actual details. One of the three devoted the complete report to a discussion concerned with the breaking down of barriers and prejudice (Cumbria Evening News and Star).

"MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE" AND THE "CONCEPTS OF JOY, DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE AND PRIDE".

The strapline " making the most of life" was used in 22 reports, four of them used it twice. Of the four concepts which were being promoted, "joy/happiness" was the one most used. Descriptions included, "the "forgotten people" are making a happy come back in a new logo campaign", (Chelsea News), "happy smiling faces", (Caernafon and Denbigh Herald), "people laughing, playing and hugging" (Stockport East Messenger). Some, papers like The Cannock Mercury concluded that this happier image created a more positive image. "Five portraits of mentally handicapped people,.... (were).. selected to portray a more positive image of those with learning disabilities and their joy, dignity and independence. " The Potters Bar Times also suggests the projection of a more positive image and said the new images "should promote a more active and happy image of mentally handicapped people". The chair of the Caernarfon group, as said the new images are "far more positive and best illustrate what we seek to achieve. Each of them shows happy smiling faces, of a couple embracing, a child playing ball, an adult swinging a child into the air and two of people with arms outstretched in greeting."

THE "LITTLE STEPHEN" LOGO.

The logo has been the focus of considerable discussion within the

organisation. Many have argued for its retention ("it's served us well in fundraising events over the years") but equally many have argued for something to replace it because of the need to respond to change and new policies. People First, the US. equivalent to "We Can Speak For Ourselves", is a group run by and for people with learning disabilities. They have criticised the logo because it implies a lack of dignity and suggests that Mencap is an organisation which is concerned only with children.

> "The sad boy depicted on our old logo is seen as an unacceptable image for an organisation that tries to promote dignity and equal rights" Billington, (Sunday Telegraph 18th Oct. 1992.)

Evans (1992) analysis of the use of the symbol supports the view of People First. She accuses Mencap of being an organisation which speaks FOR its constituents and thus denies them the power to speak for themselves. She says,

> "there is no more damning evidence of this than Mencap's "Little Steven" corporate symbol. Little Steven encapsulates the patronising idea that people with learning disablement are eternal children, inordinately dependent on charity and pity" p 139.

"Little Stephen" is referred to in 69 reports, (67 times by name and 12 times unnamed). Of the 21 reports which did not directly refer to him many of them did mention "a new logo/image". The following are phrases used to describe his image; sad faced/forlorn/sad eyed little boy; pathetic image; tearful and downtrodden boy; replacing the boy with braces; he gave the wrong impression (suggesting that Mencap dealt only with children); two photographs of the logo being burnt; portrayed a sad and negative image of the people for whom Mencap work; well known; which research has shown created negative images of people with

learning disabilities; depicting a little lad with a tear rolling from his eye; a sketch of a sad faced boy; designed to curry public sympathy for his pathetic vulnerability; the weepy looking boy is universally despised by people with learning difficulties and has perpetuated the sad, pathetic begging bowl image to the detriment of the charity; Little Stephen was a successful fundraiser for many years; dropped famous logo to feature a brighter more realistic image of the people helped by the organisation...Mencap had to move with the times; child with a mental handicapped life; pensioned off; outline sketch of the child with its head bowed; cartoon style of a melancholy waif.

In their report, the Selby Times, (29th October 1992) clearly mis- read and misunderstood the message contained within the press release when they referred to the "new logo, Little Stephen"!

The new logo was welcomed by Local and National spokespersons who were quoted in many reports as saying that they welcomed the new logo because it indicated that Mencap actually works with a wide age range of people. Mention was made that the logo had to be changed because it conveyed the impression that Mencap worked only with young children (Lincolnshire Echo) and

The Stockport East Messenger quoted research which suggested that the "sad faced little boy" created a negative image of people with learning disabilities. Consequently "Little Stephen" had been replaced with a "new logo featuring people laughing, playing and hugging." in order "to feature a brighter more realistic image of the people helped by the organisation." (Worcester

Evening News.)

USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

Photographs or sketches were used in 38 reports. These are summarised in the Table below.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM MENCAP PUBLICITY.

A	C	E	G	I	K
16	1	1	6	10*	0
B	D	F	H	J	L
6	0	0	0	0	

* Andrew Gardner and Noreen Kelly who appear as the couple were featured in a special report in the Stanmore Observer (29th Oct.1992) and an additional photograph of them was used. (See attached photographs).

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS.

"LITTLE STEPHEN"	LORD RIX	MENCAP MEMBERS/ OFFICIALS	PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	OTHERS
4*	1	5**	6	3***

* Two of these showed his image being burned.

** Four showed fundraising cheques being presented. Two people with learning disabilities were included in the ceremony.

*** A petition supporting civil rights is being presented to a Member of Parliament.

All the photographs stereotyped people with learning disabilities; two involved fundraising events; Gary Jelen, the

British Power Lifting Champion for People with Learning Disabilities; children at a special school doing a First Aid Course; a boy who is autistic with his mother (her arm around his shoulders); a man holding a plate of cakes standing next to his female tutor, and a girl using a computer at a special school with her smiling mother standing by her side.

MENCAP'S CHANGING IMAGE.

Reports were examined for the following words and phrases; "positive and/or challenging" and "educate the public/challenge public attitudes".

POSITIVE	CHALLENGE ATTITUDES
24*	29

* This figure includes 5 reports which used the phrase "to update/improve".

Many report extra details. The most commonly used statement of this type was, that

> these images open people's eyes to the fact that people with a mental disability have the same needs, emotions and dreams as everyone else, although they and their carers need additional resources and support to meet these aspirations"
> (Catherine Havern in Stafford Newsletter, 13th Nov.1992).

The new slogan "making the most of life" was underlined as summarising the attitude that Mencap wants to foster towards people with learning disabilities. 36 reports had a variation on Billington's comments (press release, 7th September 1992) about being committed to the process of change but his sentence "..and will continue to fight and campaign even more vigorously for the wider recognition of the rights of people with learning

disability to live a full and active life in the community into "images were part of a wider campaign to educate the public that people with mental handicap/learning disabilities can play a full and active role within the community."

MENCAP TO mencap.

Although the change of style of the word "Mencap" from upper to lower case lettering was not mentioned in the press releases it was mentioned in County Down Spectator, but they continued to use the older format in the remainder of their report. 16 other reports used the new version but always in connection with one of the printed logos or manifestos. In the text they always reverted back to the familiar upper case MENCAP.

MENCAP'S NEW ROLE.

All three press releases included statements about Mencap's role in fighting for the rights of people with learning disabilities and of campaigning against discrimination. 21 reports mentioned mencap's role as a campaigning or a pressure group, or as specifically fighting discrimination. These points are illustrated with the following examples. "Improving people's status", "campaigners fighting for a better deal", comments concerning local groups being pressure groups, furthering the understanding and education of children and adults with learning disabilities and their rights as human beings, changing attitudes, fighting discrimination, moving towards a life of equality, petitions supporting civil rights, charity campaigning for the abolition of discrimination, manifestos designed to challenge public attitudes, the promotion of the concept that

people with learning disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as other citizens, and "we can expect more forceful campaigning" and breaking down barriers.

HEADLINES AND SUBHEADLINES.

Reports were examined to see if they contained the following words or phrases and these are summarised below.

NUMBER OF HEADLINES USING THE FOLLOWING WORDS OR PHRASES.

NEW IMAGE/ NEW LOOK	NEW LOGO/ SYMBOL	UPDATE/ FRESH IMAGE	SPECIAL	CHALLENGE
33	5	4	7	2
MORE POSITIVE IMAGE	MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE	JOY/ HAPPINESS	CAMPAIGNS	CARING
3	4	2	2	3
OTHERS	NO HEADLINE			
23	2			

Many headlines had combinations of one or more of the above. Examples include, "Mencap go for positive image with new logos"(Caernafon and Denbigh Herald), "Positive Image, mencap making the most of life"(Chorley Guardian). "Here are the five new faces of Mencap. Logo boosts image and awareness for charity". These headlines are supported by five pictures from the new manifestos all with the words "mencap making the most of life " underneath each of the photographs of the posters (Daventry Express). Only one headline mentioned "greater equality"(West Herts and Watford Observer) and the Southampton Echo led with the words, "Change needed in understanding needs and rights". The

Lincolnshire Echo in almost a half page report tried to include everything in its headlines. The major headline "Profile will rise from "burning boy" ashes" refers to Gainsborough mencap group publicly burning the previous mencap logo "Little Stephen" and the two smaller headlines "New logos change image of handicap support group" and "Public attitude toward disabled is challenged" refer to the mencap re-launch. A sketch of "Little Stephen" and five pictures from the new manifestos each carrying the words "mencap, making the most of life" underneath.

SUBHEADLINES.

17 reports used subheadlines, the majority of them (10) using one of the new logos and the words, "mencap making the most of life." In the other four there was an appeal for rights, the "Joy of couple on charity's new positive" poster", (a special article about Andrew and Noreen, the couple on the housing manifesto, and two reports contrasting the old "Little Steven" image with the new logo.

FUNDRAISING, SPECIAL SERVICES, CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS, MENCAP AS "CARERS" AND DETAILS OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

SPECIAL SERVICES	FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES	CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS	CARER/ HELPER	DETAILS LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
24	28*	2**	15	68

* Two reports described the New Forest mencap's shop which has opened with the specific purpose to sell a range of goods made by people with learning disabilities.

Gidman in the Worcester Evening News, Helpline of 28th October 1992, was concerned with the changing nature of fundraising pointed out that "Mencap had to update itself. It needed to

change particularly as fundraising gets more professional" (Geoff Oakley, Chair of the Malvern mencap group.)

** Several other reports made reference to the fact that mencap relied largely on voluntary help and some reports invited the public to visit their local centres, join local groups or invited people to obtain more information.

The caring or helping aspects was confined either to a headline, "Five new caring faces of Mencap" or to one sentence usually at the beginning of the report. This usually consisted of examples like the following, "Volunteers helping the mentally handicapped" "supports and helps" "cares for people with learning difficulties" "helping the mentally handicapped" and shows "even greater commitment to caring for the mentally handicapped. "New sign of Mencap's caring role" (Luton News 28th Oct. 1992.).

PEOPLE INTERVIEWED OR MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY IN THE REPORTS.

People who were quoted directly in the reports were placed in the following categories.

LOCAL CHAIRS	LOCAL SECRETARIES	MENCAP SPOKES-PERSONS	PRESIDENTS	LORD RIX	OTHERS
34	6	4	3	3	10*

* These included Jessica Hardie, the mother featured on the family life manifesto; the mothers of Andrew and Noreen, the couple pictured on the front of the housing manifesto; Gary Gelen's father; and one report which named the Queen, and Queen Mother as patrons of mencap and the ex actor Lord Rix who is the National chair.

60 of the reports contained direct quotations from a variety of people usually connected with a local mencap society. Most of the people who were interviewed were local Mencap members, two whom were acknowledged as having a child with learning disabilities.

DISCUSSION.

The reporting of the Mencap relaunch by the local and provincial press was generally positive and there appeared to be an interest in reporting it. Generally recommended terminology was used and there was little use of words like "suffers" or of descriptions of people in terms of their disabilities. In "traditional" newspaper reporting Yoshida, (1990) had found that there was a great emphasis on "caring", "fundraising" and "special and segregated services", although many of the reports also included information about the "special services" offered by the local groups, much of the discussion focused on informational aspects. For example a seminar informed people about recent changes in educational provision. The largest amount of column space in most of the reports was devoted to positive details of the relaunch. However more column space in the Mid Bedfordshire Citizen (29th October, 1992) was used to discuss special services provided by the Bedford branch of mencap. (see attached). Generally the relaunch was reported positively. All agreed that "Little Stephen" should be replaced by the more positive images of real people with learning disabilities, and that the new images embraced a more representative societal group. The more political areas such as campaigning and rights issues, although not always highlighted in the press releases, were mentioned in many of the reports.

The selection of which of the images the reporters chose to print was interesting with certain images being favoured whilst others were ignored. Caroline Cook, relaunch photographer, took hundreds of photographs, five of which were chosen to encapsulate the

Mencap image which is

> ...independence, rights, family, loving, caring, support, winning, achieving, multiracial, universal, challenging, all ages, joyous and speaking for yourself.
> (mencapr...s November 1992 p 11.)

Mencap went to some trouble to choose the photographs and consulted groups of interested people about the choice.

There was considerable confusion about what was meant by the "logo", the "five images" and the "manifestos". Mencap's own publicity was unclear, as were their press reports. This was a missed opportunity. Left to their own devices, the press "selected" their favourite images which the analysis highlights. These were stereotypically narrow in their concept and included, a black woman and child, (why not a man?) a heterosexual couple, with the white male protecting the white female. Both people have learning disabilities and fit the stereotypical view that "its OK for like to marry like." Happy Bobby is a white male who has his arms stretched into the air. He is not actually doing anything specific but enjoying it. (This is a passive image.)

A happy young white man, standing smiling with his arms open wide waiting for something. He was often shown on the front on the employment manifesto. (How realistic is this?) A young white attractive girl throwing a ball in the air was also seen in some of the reports.

A strength of the new campaign could have been the positive steps taken by the Mencap image makers to cover issues of race, gender and different levels of disability. By giving unclear information these were diluted. The following images did not appear in any of the reports; Older woman on her own (K); older man (D);

the black boy (J); the black girl playing the cymbals (F) or the young white boy with the balloon (H). The wheelchair image (C) is used only once and the black images used only in the stereotypic way of a woman caring for her baby.

"Little Stephen" in all the reports was considered to be a negative representation and was reported as being no longer in use (except the Selby Times). None of the reports said that part of the reason for his removal was because he was a "white boy". Instead they concentrated on his sad, pathetic appearance. None of our sample suggested that this image should remain.

Reports were not always clear about their definitions of the use of the logo, or the five images, or the six manifestos. (Full details of the relaunch are given at the end of the paper).

CAN CHARITIES PRODUCE POSITIVE IMAGES?

The question Mencap must address is, is it possible to be both a campaigning force and a charity? Mason (1992) points out that, because it is illegal to be "political and a charity", only if you are independently wealthy is it possible to combine the two activities. She goes on to say,

> "The images created by the charity industry to raise funds reinforce the sad, passive, unfortunate image of disability....and they leave us without the fundamental right to be included in mainstream services as equal citizens. We are still beggars, even if that begging has become more sophisticated. (p 47.)

Jessica Evans and Andy Golding (1992) "challenge the illusion of neutrality in the portrayal of people with learning disabilities by charities" (p 140). They want

> to produce images not as a means of establishing evidence about "what mentally handicapped people are really like" but in order to politicise the concept of "mental Handicap".

(p 140)

Mencap is a campaigning force, but the images that it produces do not accurately represent in picture form the complex nature of learning disability. Instead of introducing controversial photographic imagery, the well established logo "mencap" which the society decided to retain with the addition of the new strapline "making the most of life", might have produced a more appropriate campaigning image.

CAN CHARITIES INFLUENCE NEWSPAPER REPORTING ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES?

The media do not see disabled people as a minority group with a political identity and therefore the disability community is not considered to be newsworthy. (Waxman,B.1991,cited Gazsi,1992) Because of this, Yoshida (1990) suggested that in an attempt to get their stories printed more accurately "special educators must develop strong relationships with newspaper reporters and their editors".

(p 418) Newspapers are commercial ventures and employ a minimal number of journalists to cover a whole range of stories. The need to meet urgent deadlines, reduces the time for research and consequently only easily accessible information is used. Space is also a consideration. Therefore press releases must be clear, concise and provide all the essential background information. News writers have "stock" ways of presenting a particular issue. Disability, is often written about in terms of tragedy, of charity, pity, or of the struggle and subsequent courage of overcoming disability. Reporters bring with them to a story a

combination of such standard "frames" for presenting it to readers. (Gitlin, T. 1980).

The press releases prior to the relaunch created confusion about what were the "new images" and what was the logo. Jernian (1975) cited by Biklen 1987) in his account of how a particular reporter at a political convention "chose to write from a traditional, debilitating "frame rather than focus on the issues of discrimination, civil rights, and political organizing that were the meat of the conference. He emphasised how difficult it was to encourage reporters to move out of their "frame". As the evidence indicates public attitudes are still generally negative towards disabled people (Barnes,1992, Reiser, 1992). It is essential that charities give information in their press release that they want to see in print.

As we suggested in our introduction, those characteristics of conservatism, parochialism and promotion of local benefactors cannot but influence press coverage of disabilities charities. In addition to this overall pattern, Mencap have a further complication in that there are a large number of local branches and therefore a large number of potential spokespersons, who need to be carefully briefed in dealing with the press. What became clear was that the local spokespersons had used the press release as the basis for their own comments to the local press. Whilst we realise that this is an inevitable feature of local newspapers, we suggest that in order to improve their press coverage, Mencap could give clearer guidelines to local groups about how to use the press and to give interviews. This will diminish the use of inappropriate terminology, stereotypic

photographs and encourage the development of more positive reporting.

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Abingdon Herald, 29 Oct 1992: Five new images of caring

Amersham Free Press, 23 Oct 1992: Charity campaigns

Andover Advertiser, 30 Oct 1992: New logo

Ballymena Observer, 6 Nov 1992: Mencap meet at local hotel

Barnet Borough Times, 22 Oct 1992: Gary gives himself a record lift target

Beaconsfield Free Press, 23 Oct 1992: Charity campaigns

Bedford & Kempston Citizen, 29 Oct 1992: Making the most of life

Brackley & Towcester Advertiser, 13 Nov 1992: ...and those at relaunch

Brighouse Echo, 6 Nov 1992: New image for charity

Bucks Free Press, 23 Oct 1992: Charity campaigns

Bucks Herald, 29 Oct 1992: New Mencap symbol to spearhead campaign

Burton Herald & Post, 28 Oct 1992: Mencap logo

Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald, 30 Oct 1992: Mencap go for positive image with new logos

Cannock Mercury, 29 Oct 1992: Changing face of MENCAP

Chelsea News, 29 Oct 1992: A smile that launched 1,000 appeals

Chester Chronicle (City), 30 Oct 1992: MENCAP's new image

Chester and District Standard, 29 Oct 1992: Mencap's new image

Chorley Guardian, 29 Oct 1992: Positive image

Clacton Gazette, 30 Oct 1992: New president boost for MENCAP

County Down Spectator & Ulster Standard, 29 Oct 1992: A more positive image for MENCAP

Daventry Express, 29 Oct. 1992: Logo boosts image and awareness for charity

Democrat (Dungannon), 29 Oct 1992: News from Mencap

Derbyshire Times, 29 Oct 1992: Helpers' sign of progress

Dungannon News & Tyrone Courier, 28 Oct 1992: Dungannon group joins national launch

Ellesmere Port Pioneer, Nov 1992: Five new caring faces of Mencap

Essex Chronicle Woodham, 30 Oct, 1992: Chelmsford Mencap Society... (etc)

Evening Echo (Bournemouth), 31 Oct 1992: Mencap's new-look shop opens

Evening Echo (Bournemouth), 6 Nov 1992: Mencap takes on a new image

Evening News and Star (Cumbria), 29 Oct 1992: Breaking down the barriers

Evening News (Worcester), 28 Oct 1992: Mencap going for a more optimistic logo design

Folkestone Herald, 6 Nov 1992: Images to challenge for local Mencap

Gainsborough News, 28 Oct 1992: New image for Mencap

Gainsborough Target, 30 Oct, 1992: Burning for new image

Gazette (Dursley, Cam, Wotton-under-Edge, Berkeley, Sharpness & The Vale), 30 Oct 1992: Happier image

Glossop Chronicle, 22 Oct 1992: Mencap gets an appropriate logo

Glossop Chronicle, 12 Nov 1992: Group loses Roy

Gloucester Citizen, 27 Oct 1992: Charity unveils a new look

Guardian (Walthamstow), 3 Dec 1992: Making the most of life

Hartlepool Mail, 29 Oct 1992: Mencap books new image

Heartland Evening News (Nuneaton), 28 Oct 1992: Making the most of life

Henley Standard, 30 Oct 1992: New image for Mencap

Herald (Harrowgate), 4 Nov 1992: Charity's new image

Hexham Courant, 23 Oct 1992: Mencap gets new logos

High Peak Courier, 23 Oct 1992: Mencap has new look

Holderness Gazette, 30 Oct 1992: MENCAP launch NEW LOGO

Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 5 Nov 1992: Mencap updates image

Hyt'e Herald, 30 Oct 1992: Mencap strive to create a fresh image

Hythe Herald, 6 Nov 1992: Images to challenge for local Mencap

Keighley News, 23 Oct 1992: Image update

Keighley News, 30 Oct, 1992: Mencap's new image

Leicester Mercury, 28 Oct 1992: New image for Mencap

Lincolnshire Echo, 26 Oct 1992: Profile will rise from "burning boy" ashes

Lincolnshire Standard, 6 Nov 1992: New look for MENCAP group

Luton News, 28 Oct 1992: New sign of Mencap caring role

Lynn News (Tuesday), 4 Nov 1992: MENCAP gets an image update

Matlock Mercury, 23 Oct 1992: Mencap

Mid Bedfordshire Citizen, 29 Oct 1992: Making the most of life

Mirror Extra (Redhill, Reigate & Horley), 23 Oct 1992: East Surrey Mencap... (etc)

New Forest Post, 5 Nov 1992: New moves for Mencap

News (Portsmouth), 5 Nov 1992: Sad boy gives way to joy of life

Newton and Golborne Guardian, 30 Oct 1992: New look for care group

North Wales Weekly News, 29 Oct 1992: Mencap re-launch

North-West Evening Mail, 26 Oct 1992: Mencap visit

Pontefract & Castleford Express, 29 Oct 1992: Society's new look

Potters Bar Times, 5 Nov 1992: New image launched

Risborough Free Press, 23 Oct 1992: Charity campaigns

Romney Marsh Herald, 30 Oct 1992: Mencap strive to create a fresh image

Romney Marsh Herald, 6 nov 1992: Images to challenge for local Mencap

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Sale & Altrincham Messenger, inc. Sale & Altrincham Guardian, 6 Nov 1992: Mencap joins move towards a new image

Scarborough Evening News, 9 Nov 1992: Charity's new image

Selby Times, 29 Oct 1992: Little Stephen is MENCAP's sign of times

Shrewsbury Chronicle, 29 Oct 1992: New images for Mencap

Somerset County Gazette, 30 Oct 1992: Mencap makes the most of it

Somerset Standard, 30 Oct 1992: MENCAP launches new image

Somerset Standard, 6 Nov 1992: MP is Mencap's branch president

South Kent Citizen, 4 Nov 1992: Out goes sad little Stephen -- and in come new "challenging" images

Southampton Echo, 27 Oct 1992: Change needed in understanding needs and rights

Spalding Guardian, 23 Oct 1992: New-look Mencap

Stafford Express and Star, 29 Oct 1992: Charity adopts new logo

Stafford Newsletter, 13 Nov 1992: Charity's new look

Stafford Post, 29 Oct 1992: Charity gets a facelift

Stanmore Observer, 29 Oct 1992: "She's not just my friend. She's my girlfriend"

Stockport East Messenger, 6 Nov 1992: Charity changes image to fight discrimination

Stockport Times (East), 29 Oct 1992: New look mencap

Stockport West Messenger, 6 Nov 1992: Charity changes image to fight discrimination

Stroud News & Journal, 28 Oct 1992: Family in national campaign

Suffolk Free Press, 5 Nov 1992: Mencap launch their new image

Thame Gazette, 23 Oct 1992: New image for charity

Warrington Guardian, 30 Oct 1992: New look for care group

Weekly Tribune (inc. Nuneaton, Bedworth Atherstone Citizen & Observer, 5 Nov 1992: Book boosts new image

Western Mail (Cardiff), 29 Oct 1992: A boy from the village

Western Telegraph, 4 Nov 1992: MENCAP launches a new image

West Herts & Watford Observer, 13 Nov 1992: Group launches plan for greater equality

Westmorland Gazette, 23 Oct 1992: MENCAP new look

Yorkshire Evening Press, 28 Oct 1992: Change of image

This represents a real total of 90. Six of the reports were printed twice in different newspapers.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
7 October 1992

MENCAP

MENCAP PRESS RELEASE

Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults

MENCAP National Centre 123 Golden Lane London EC1Y 0RT
Telephone 071-454 0454 Fax 071-608 3254

REVOLUTIONARY NEW IDENTITY FOR MENCAP

MENCAP, the leading national organisation for people with a learning disability (mental handicap), is to launch a revolutionary new corporate identity, developed by design consultancy The Partners.

A series of five striking images have been created to be used in conjunction with a new logo and strapline "making the most of life". These images are photographs of people of different ages and ethnic backgrounds with a learning disability, which effectively reflect MENCAP's new objectives for the future.

The new identity aims to update MENCAP's image by communicating the charity as an efficient, forward thinking organisation, at the same time as showing people with a learning disability in a positive way.

Steve Billington, MENCAP's Director of Marketing and Appeals, said:

"We are delighted with the identity, it will help to change the public's perception of people with a learning disability. The new images will challenge public attitudes and help us in our continuing fight for civil rights."

MENCAP will launch the new identity on Monday 26 October as part of a major corporate relaunch. In addition to the new identity, a new MENCAP manifesto will be published, and the MENCAP Media Awards Scheme will be launched by Lord Snowdon.

For further information please contact: **Ends**

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For immediate release

MENCAP PRESS R...

Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults
MENCAP National Centre 123 Golden Lane London EC1Y 0RT
Telephone 071-454 0454 Fax 071-608 3254

A NEW OUTLOOK FOR MENCAP

On Monday 26 October MENCAP will reveal a new logo, utilising five striking images which symbolise the charity's new objectives for the 1990's and beyond.

The series of eye catching images show people with a learning disability in strong, positive poses and will replace the little boy logo known as 'Little Stephen' which has represented the charity for over 20 years. MENCAP's new look will be just one feature of a major corporate relaunch which will mark its changing objectives and the beginning of a more campaigning approach to the issues faced by people with a learning disability.

The change for MENCAP underlines its original purpose of changing public attitudes and winning rights and opportunities for people with a learning disability.

The corporate relaunch will also feature the publication of the MENCAP manifesto, which sets out the organisation's aims and objectives on key policy issues, including citizenship, education, employment, family life, leisure and housing. The manifesto will form the basis of MENCAP's work for people with a learning disability and their families for the next ten years and beyond.

Steve Billington, Director of Marketing and Appeals, said :
"The new image and the manifesto are visible demonstrations of the internal changes taking place in MENCAP. We are committed to the process of change and will continue to fight and campaign even more vigorously for the wider recognition of the rights of people with a learning disability to live a full and active life in the community."

The media will be called upon to help MENCAP in this fight. The MENCAP Media Award, which will be launched by Lord Snowdon, aims to encourage the positive portrayal of people with disabilities in the media and so help to convey these vital images and messages to a wider public.

The launch day will also incorporate a major civil rights conference, where Government ministers and specialists drawn from the field will challenge existing attitudes and explore new ways of achieving human and citizen's rights for people with a learning disabiity. The day's proceedings will culminate with a relaunch reception incorporating the MENCAP International Art Exhibition, a celebration of the creative talents of people with a learning disability from around the world.

ENDS

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For Release 26 October 1992

RELAUNCH STEERS MENCAP INTO THE NEXT CENTURY

Today MENCAP, one of Briatin's best known charities, is launching a new corporate image to take it into the next century.

Five innovative new logos showing positive images of people with a learning disability will be unveiled. The concepts of joy, dignity, independence and pride contained in the images are a more accurate reflection of people with a learning disability than the previous logo, Little Stephen, which depicted a sad and pathetic image of a small white boy. The new logos show a mixture of people of different ages, races, gender and levels of disability.

To mark the Relaunch MENCAP is hosting a London-based conference on civil rights for people with disabilities. Speakers will include Minister of Health, Tim Yeo MP, Canadian expert Marcia Rioux and other national specialists in the field of learning disability.

A series of six pioneering manifestos will also be published at the Relaunch in London today, clearly describing, in plain English, the organisation's past campaigning achievements and current campaigning objectives on key policy issues. The manifestos concentrate on the areas of citizenship, education, employment, family life, housing and leisure.

Lord Rix, MENCAP Chairman, said today:

"A large proportion of the general public is unaware of the problems facing people with a learning disability in their day-to-day lives.

"With this relaunch MENCAP is giving a clear message to Government ministers, politicians, local authorities and the general public that MENCAP will continue to campaign with renewed vigour for the abolition of discrimination against people with a learning disability," he said.

Crucial to MENCAP's campaign is the way people with disabilities are represented in the media. To encourage a positive portrayal of people with disabilities, Lord Snowdon will launch the MENCAP Media Awards this afternoon.

Relaunch Day will round off with the Gala Preview of the 29th International Exhibition of Art by People with a Learning Disability at the Cottons Centre in London. Guests at this celebration of creative talent include celebrities, leading politicians and some of the artists.

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Mid Bedfordshire Citizen
Planner No. 728-70.190
Weekly

REGION 3

2 OCT 1992

Making the most of life

● Although Natwest supports Mencap on a national basis, it also operates Matching Support, a scheme that donates money to a local charity that is supported or helped by a member of staff.

Pictured left at Trinity Gardens are Martin Harker, regional executive director NatWest 's South East Midlands Region who is presenting a £500 cheque to Mike Bonney, Bedford Mencap treasurer who also works at NatWest regional office, Meg Curran and twins Richard and Edward Crabbe.

CHANGING attitudes and greater understanding of the mentally handicapped have led to an increasing number moving from large institution-like hospitals and living in family units within local communities.

And this week Mencap, as part of its campaign to educate the public that people with learning disabilities/mental handicaps can still play a full and active role in the community, launched its new logo.

The logo 'Making the most of life' will be part of five new images, and will will replace the little boy — known as Stephen — logo which over the years has become synonymous with Mencap.

Mencap relies heavily on voluntary help, and here in Bedford we have a very active branch, which supports and helps its 400 plus members — ages range from as young as three up to the 60 year-olds.

Just as the age varies greatly, so do the different disabilities or handicaps.

Consequently, the type of help has to be tailor-made in order to answer the individual need.

One of the main activities of the Bedford branch is the providing of holidays. Last year, for example, £5,000 was used to send members on holiday to Bamberg or Overstrand in Norfolk.

In some cases, families are given some financial assistance to help them get away for a break.

Another main project of Bedford Mencap, is boosting the number of day care places.

Of the 400 people aged 19 to 60 in North Bedfordshire and Ampthill, about 250 attend a day centre. 50 go out of the county and 100 are in Bromham Hospital. All the Bedford and Kempston centres are full and very understaffed.

The other area requiring considerable funds is housing.

Small housing units based on a family structure are a necessary part of helping those with learning disabilities/menatal handicaps to live in the community.

Bedford Mencap in conjunction with housing associations has established several suitable properties for small groups to live together as a family.

It is just one way Bedford Mencap is helping its members make the most of life.....

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DETAILS OF THE RELAUNCH.

1. The name "Mencap" was retained but is now written in a lower case format, "mencap".

mencap

2. The strapline "making the most of life" was added.

mencap

making the most of life

3. MENCAP NEWS was renamed as mencap news. "mencap" is written in white lettering; "news" in black and there is a red background.

mencap

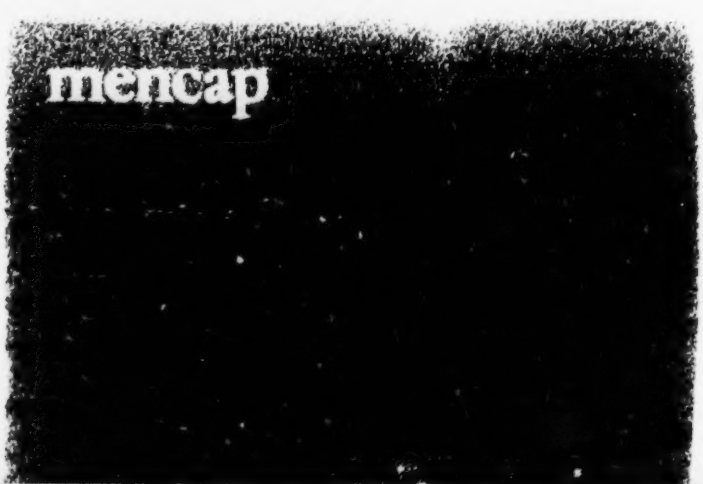
4. The colours for the publicity material were standardised as follows:

red for the background,
black for all lettering apart from the word "mencap" which is written in white.

MENCAP

BLACK

RED



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5. Five photographic images of real people with learning disabilities became the new logos.

mencap

making the most of life

L

mencap

making the most of life

G

mencap

making the most of life

B

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mencap

mencap

6. Six manifesto statements were produced.
   a) Housing.
   b) Citizenship
   c) Family Life.
   d) Leisure.
   e) Employment.
   f) Education.

Some of the above images were used in these manifesto statements but others were also used.

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7. "Little Stephen" was replaced with th[illegible] new images.